



Novelized by...
Charles N. Lurie
From The Great Play
by Elmer
Reizenstein...

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(Continued.)

"I don't know what happened then. I must have fainted. But the sound of that automobile went through my head for weeks. Soon after father died."

"Then I met Robert, my husband. When I saw that he loved me I tried to tell him about—about that terrible experience, but I was afraid of destroying his happiness. He would not have understood. Men don't understand. And I loved him so! He seemed to need me and to need his belief in me."

"I came to realize I must never tell him. He was all that life meant to me. I wanted to devote my every thought to shielding him from the slightest unhappiness. Even though he was a strong man, he seemed to need my protection. Two years later we were married. I had begun to think of that awful experience only as a terrible dream."

"Then my baby, Doris, came. And I had two to watch over. Their happiness was my one aim in life. For nine years we three were so happy together. Then one day, about a year ago, Robert mentioned his name. He had met that man somewhere. I hoped that their acquaintance was only passing, but they became more friendly. Robert spoke several times of having us meet, but for a year I avoided that meeting."

"Meanwhile Robert's business troubles had begun. He—that man—lent him money and helped him in other ways. With their growing friendship I decided the wrecking of all our happiness. Then a business opportunity arose which would take us from New York. I urged Robert to accept this, and he finally decided to. It seemed as if some power were guarding the happiness of my husband and baby."

"It was a Monday when Robert left for Cleveland. Tuesday night he came. It was about the note which was due then. He recognized me and threatened to tell Robert everything. He taunted me, saying that Robert would believe anything against me because of my long silence."

"He demanded that I come to his house at Long Branch the next day. I begged for mercy. I went down on my knees to him. I begged and begged. He wouldn't even listen to me. He said he would make a pauper of Robert."



"Look here, Trumbull, will you listen to reason?"

"I knew that the \$10,000 was due, and I didn't think that Robert could pay. I was mad with fear. I didn't care for myself. I only thought of Robert and my baby. Their happiness was in my hands. I was ready to pay any price to shield them. If by dying I could have saved them I would have died willingly. It would have been much easier. But there was only one way, and I had to save them. But Robert found out, and all my years of planning were shattered."

"Last evening, as I lay half-conscious in the hospital, I heard the nurses discussing the testimony of a little girl. I learned it was my little girl and that my husband was on trial for murder and burglary. They didn't want to let me go, but I made them understand that my husband might be put to death unless the truth were known."

"I've told you the truth. Can't you understand? He didn't go there to rob. He didn't go there for the money. Robert's not a thief. I am to blame. The fault is all mine. I've ruined the lives of my husband and baby. God forgive me! God forgive me!"

CHAPTER XVI. In the Jury Room.

THE shrewdness of a practiced lawyer Arbuttle let the case for the defense rest with the testimony of May Strickland. The effect on the jury of her story, he and all others in the court-

room saw, was overpowering. Nothing could be added to it without harming the case for the defense; nothing that the prosecution might do, although the district attorney strove hard in his address, could detract from its immense effect on the twelve men who held the fate of the defendant in their hands.

Judge Dinsmore's charge to the jury was eminently fair, all agreed, and the newspapers voiced that opinion. The whole city waited at the news tickers, it seemed, to hear the verdict.

As is natural and usual in such cases, public opinion was divided. Some argued that Robert Strickland was justified in killing the invader of his home, and these were in the majority. They dwelt on the enormity of Trask's offense and reviled him for not permitting a blameless wife and mother to pursue the happy way of her life in peace. It is to be said to the credit of mankind in the great city that very few doubted her story.

Those who found it in their minds, if not in their hearts, to condemn Strickland dwelt on the enormity of murder even when committed in the heat of passion. Nothing can excuse or extenuate the killing of man, they argued, and to uphold the law Strickland should be compelled to pay the utmost penalty despite his wife's story. To these the majority made answer.

"Of what use can it be to kill this man? In the heat of passion he killed another, it is true. But would it not be far better to say to him, 'Go and sin no more,' restore him to his dear beloved wife and child and let him take up his new life in Cleveland as carefully planned? It is certain that Robert Strickland will commit no more murder."

The matter of the missing money held the attention of but few. The great majority of the city's residents were sure that Robert Strickland was no thief. But it was just that very point that kept the jury out.

The decision was very long in coming. The jury had been out for hours. In their room the jurymen discussed every phase of the noted case; but, as they told afterward, from the very beginning there was unanimous agreement.



"It's all been cleared up," said another juror, rising.

that here if ever was a case in which the "unwritten law" had jurisdiction. Not a voice was raised in doubt of May Strickland's story. Her manner had convinced the minds of the jurors that she had told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The natural abhorrence of all right thinking men for the deliberate home breaker spoke in the voices of the jurymen when they mentioned the name of Gerald Trask. And the mention of the name of Robert Strickland brought forth generally only sympathy.

That is, so far as May Strickland and his little daughter were concerned. But there were other matters to be considered.

Eleven times were the names of jurors called, and each time the name was followed by a different voice, saying:

"Not guilty!"

The eleventh man had hesitated before pronouncing the words, and his vote was acclaimed by cries of "Good!"

"That's the stuff!"

But one juror said: "Wait a moment. Mr. Trumbull hasn't voted. How do you vote, Trumbull?"

Trumbull, foreman of the jury, replied to the question indirectly:

"Gentlemen, we stand eleven for acquittal and one for conviction!"

His decision against Strickland evoked exclamations of dissent and indignation. He was besought to change his vote, to restore Strickland to his wife and child. The jurors thronged about their recalcitrant foreman excitedly, demanding to know why he wanted to send Strickland to the chair. They asked him to put himself in Strickland's place. Would he or would

he not defend his home in like case? The argument was heated. "Listen to reason, Trumbull!" one juror exclaimed. The foreman replied: "What's the good of sending Strickland to the chair? You don't bring Trask back to life, do you? All you do is kill off a good, clean, straightforward chap who's a valuable asset to the community. And who suffers most? Strickland? Not he. His wife and his little girl—they're the sufferers. You throw a sensitive woman out on the world and give a little baby a blot upon her name that she'll never be able to wipe out. What's your idea? Why do you want to convict him?"

"I don't want to convict him. I don't want to be instrumental in sending any man to his death. I agree with you all that Strickland had cause for killing Trask."

"But still you vote for conviction." "Yes," replied Trumbull. "Because I'm not sure that Strickland went to Trask's house because of his wife. I'm inclined to think he went there to rob the safe."

There was immediate dissent, almost if not quite unanimous. "Strickland's no burglar," said one man; and another declared, "One look at Strickland ought to convince you that he's not a safe cracker."

"I grant you all that, gentlemen," said the foreman, "but you can't do the facts. There's a chain of circumstances woven around Strickland that, to my mind, would damn the Angel Gabriel. Just consider the facts. Strickland was hard pressed. He paid Trask the \$10,000 in cash. Why did he pay it in cash? He was the only one besides Trask who knew the combination of the safe. And he was on the spot when the safe was opened. Looks pretty bad, don't you think?"

"Of course it looks bad, but it's all been cleared up," said another juror, rising. "We know why Strickland went there."

"There are two things I'd like you to explain to me," said Trumbull. "First, how did the burglar open the safe? The police officer testified that the burglars were in perfect order. Gentlemen, he opened the safe with the combination. And the only source from which he could learn the combination was Strickland. That's not all, gentlemen. There's something else you'll have to explain to my satisfaction before I vote for acquittal."

"Strickland had that combination on a card. The card was the only really incriminating evidence against him. If he's innocent of the burglary, as you say he is, why did he attempt to destroy the card?"

"How do you know he did?" "Why," said Trumbull, "here's the card. Don't you see that it's torn all most in two? And didn't Glover testify that it was Strickland who tore it?"

The jurors looked at the card, and there ensued a heated argument, some contending, others denying, that Stanley Glover, secretary to Gerald Trask, had testified to Strickland's trying to destroy the card. Trumbull asserted that Strickland attempted to destroy the card in order to wipe out the evidence that would be bound to convict him.

"I don't think he did attempt to destroy the card," said one juror.

"Yes, he did!" contended another juror.

"No."

"Glover said so!"

"I seem to remember Glover saying so."

"He didn't."

"I don't know if he did or not."

The foreman checked the argument by saying:

"We don't seem to agree about it. We ought to find out."

"Let's send for Glover and ask him," suggested a juror.

"We can't do that. We'll have to get permission to have his testimony read to us," said another.

"All right; I'll send a note to the judge," was Trumbull's final remark to his colleagues.

And the result of the argument was the decision to send to Judge Dinsmore a request to have Glover's testimony read to the jury if such action was permitted by the law.

In the courtroom the counsel for both sides, the clerk, the stenographer, the attendants and others were waiting impatiently for the verdict when an officer heard the buzzer calling for him. He hurried to the jury room and reentered the courtroom a moment later with a note, which he carried to the private room of the waiting Judge Dinsmore.

Conspicuous in the courtroom were District Attorney Gray and Dr. Morgan, the physician who had been summoned to the Trask home after the shooting. Morgan and Gray discussed the case in a low voice, their conversation ceasing when the judge entered the courtroom and took his place on the bench.

Then the jury entered and took their places and the prisoner was brought in and took his seat. A few seconds later Mrs. Strickland and Doris entered the room and seated themselves beside him.

(To Be Continued.)

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Sanitary organization has been carried to the highest degree possible in military operations as large as are now witnessed in Europe. Still, it is inevitable that the war will breed defects and sow the seeds of disease on an enormous scale.

It is, therefore, part of a sound "preparedness policy" thoroughly to inspect and, where possible, to strengthen American fortifications against the disease "enemy." This is now being done.

The first line of defense, or the quarantine, involves the infinite precautions and a gauntlet of inspections to prevent the quarantinable diseases from getting a foothold in the United States. These diseases are plague, cholera, yellow fever, typhus, smallpox and leprosy. The second line provides for complete physical examination of every emigrant, and thus weeds out all immigrants who are classified as physically or mentally undesirable. The third and fourth lines are depended on for emergency service if, notwithstanding the efforts of the first and second lines, the "disease" enemy effects a landing in America.

HOW UNCLE SAM REACHES THE PEOPLE

Wide dissemination of health facts is one of the highest general importance. The stereopticon, the "movie," the talent of both writing and picture story tellers, therefore, are being employed to lay these facts before the public. "The Stereopticon Loan Library" of the Public Health Service is an interesting illustration of the advertising scheme maintained by the United States government for humanitarian purposes solely.

The library contains thousands of slides showing the cause of disease and the tested methods of their prevention and cure. Without cost, these slides are loaned to physicians, health organizations, educators, welfare workers and, in fact, to any responsible applicant.

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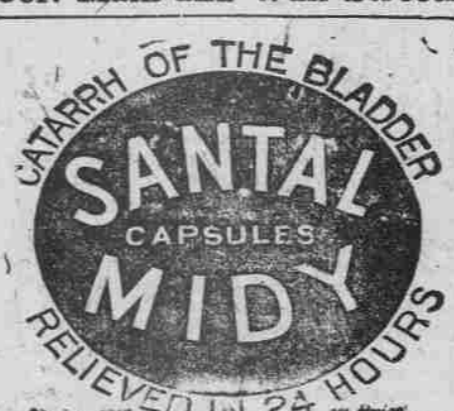
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